

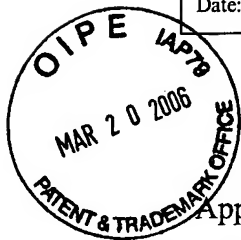
I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the USPTO or deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as **first class mail** in an envelope addressed to "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450" [37 CFR 1.8(a)] on the date shown below.

Date: March 17, 2006

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



(Laura Shires)



**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Application No.: 10/798,018  
Confirmation No.: 8804  
Filing Date: March 11, 2004  
Inventor(s): Michael D. LAUFER et al.  
Title: SURGICAL FASTENING SYSTEM  
Examiner: G. Dawson  
Group Art Unit: 3731

**RESPONSE TO FINAL OFFICE ACTION**

Mail Stop AF  
Commissioner for Patent  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

This is in response to the final Office Action mailed February 14, 2006 for which a response is due on May 14, 2006. Applicant is responding within 2 months from the mailing date of the Office Action and request expedited review.

**Amendments to the Specification** begin on page 2 of this paper.

**Amendments to the Drawings** begin on page 3 of this paper.

**Remarks** begin on page 4 of this paper.